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ZEBRO, n. Asno montés, R. Is. xxxii, 14.

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Till IN THE SENSE OF Before.

In some strictures on the English of Mr. William Dean Howells made by Dr. Hall in his *Recent Exemplifications of False Philology* (New York, 1872), at page 107 (foot-note), there is the following quotation from *Suburban Sketches*:

"It seemed long till that foolish voice was stilled."

This is Dr. Hall's comment: "Is this barbarous use of *till* peculiar to the West? It occurs in *Venetian Life*, also, pp. 96, 114. I know it only as an Irishism, in modern times."

It is natural to want to know what it is in this use of *till* that is barbarous, and one turns (after glancing at "Irishism" and "peculiar to the West") to the index for enlightenment. There the information is supplied,—*"Till, for before, 107."*

The edition of *Venetian Life* referred to by Dr. Hall is an early one, and its paging apparently different from later editions. In one of 1880, I have found the passages quoted below at the pages there indicated. Perhaps Dr. Hall would regard these passages and the one quoted above as objectionable for the same reason. The relation of the pages where these passages are, to the pages cited by Dr. Hall, suggests that they may be the ones to which he referred.

"It is sufficiently bad to live in a rented house; in a house which you have hired ready-furnished it is long till your life takes root," p. 104.

"I have said G. was the flower of serving-women; and so at first she seemed, and it was long till we doubted her perfection," p. 122.

At present, however, let us restrict our attention to the passage quoted by Dr. Hall, and to the definition of its error supplied in the index to his *Recent Exemplifications*. Dr. Hall says that the use of *till* in the sentence quoted is "barbarous," and that *till* as there used is "for before." The implication seems to be that the use of "till, for before,"

—that is in the sense of *before*—is barbarous. Now, on the contrary, to me these two things seem probable: (1) That, in the passage quoted, "till" is *not* "for before," and (2) that the use of "till, for before," is often quite right. Let us consider the second point first, and turn to literature to see whether a use of *till* that Dr. Hall regarded as "barbarous" has not the sanction of a considerable range of literary authority.

"Treuli Y seie to you, that this generacioun schal not passe, till alle thingis be don."—Wycliffe and Purvey, *The New Testament*, Luke, ch. xxi. Clarendon Press, 1879.

"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all things be accomplished."—*The New Testament*. Luke, xxi, Revised Version, Cambridge University Press, 1881.

"...but who believes it, till Death tells it us?—Sir Walter Raleigh "History of the World," *Typical Selections from the Best English Writers* (Clarendon Press Series), vol. i, p. 17.

"... but long it could not be
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death." *Hamlet*, iv., vii.

"...and begged of me not to go on shore till day." Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, Stockdale ed., 1790, vol. i., p. 28.

"Man little knows what calamities are beyond his patience to bear till he tries them."—Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, ch. xviii.

But perhaps Goldsmith was using an Irishism.

"It [Guido's *Siege of Troy*] does not seem to have much entered into English literature till Chaucer's time, but Chaucer and Lydgate both used it."—Stopford Brooke, *English Literature Primer* (New York, 1894), sec. 25, p. 32.

"She did not know how long she had been there, till she was startled by the prayer-bell."—George Eliot, *Mr. Gilfil's Love Story*, ch. v.

"...though I demur to the truth of the assertion, yet there is no saying till the thing is tried."—William Hazlitt, *On the Conversation of Lords* (*Sketches and Essays*, London, 1884, p. 200).

"Northumberland strictly obeyed the injunction which had been laid on him, and did not open the door of the royal apartment till it was broad day."—Macaulay, *History of England*, vol. iii, ch. x, p. 294.

"Nothing could wake her to life till the time came." George du Maurier, *Peter Ibbetson*, Part Fifth, p. 307.

"That, however, at the earliest would not be till tomorrow."—W. H. Mallock, *A Human Document*, ch. xvi, p. 29.

"He had planned not to touch his hoard till he had done with the Frampton job, and returned to Clinton for good."—Mrs. Humphry Ward, *The Story of Bessie Costrell* (New York, 1895), scene iv, p. 98.

"...but I had no formal religious convictions till I was fifteen."—J. H. Newman, *Apologia*, ch. i, p. 1.

So, too, *until*.

"On the present occasion, we did not quit the dinner until Mr. Slang, the manager, was considerably excited by wine..." Thackeray, *The Ravenswing*, ch. vii.

"...Tom was delighted and greatly relieved to see us, having quite abandoned all hope of our appearing until the morning..." Lady Brassey, *Last Voyage* (London, 1887), p. 201.

"Man is altogether passive in this call, until the Holy Spirit enables him to answer it."—Matthew Arnold, *St. Paul and Protestantism*, p. 9.

"One always thought of the country as gray, until one looked and found that it was green."—George du Maurier, *Peter Ibbetson* (New York), Part Second, p. 81.

The intention of "We won't go home till morning" was irregular and indiscreet, but its English is without fault.

Till or *until* is preferably used for *before*, when the proximity of some word of an incongruous sense would make *before* sound misplaced or odd. Among incongruous words of this kind are certain prepositions and adverbs, as *after*, *later*, *within*, etc.

"It is hardly possible, therefore, that disputes about politics or religion should have embittered his [Barère's] domestic life till some time after he became a husband."—Macaulay, *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays* (D. Appleton & Co., 1879), vol. v, p. 157,—*"Barère's Memoirs."*

"Now whose this small voice was I did not find out till many years later..."—George du Maurier, *Peter Ibbetson*, Part Second, p. 105.

"Her nature, indeed, had never gauged its own capacities for pleasure till within the last few months."—Mrs. Humphry Ward, *The Story of Bessie Costrell* (New York, 1895), scene v, p. 162.

"...her armies had not approached the Vistula until weeks after the disaster of Jena."—W. O. Morris, *Napoleon* (New York and London, 1894), p. 201.

"Only sixty-three, and apoplexy quite unknown until now in our family!"—Thackeray, *The Book of Snobs*, ch. xxiv.

"It was not, however, till several years after that it occurred to the much-wandering poet to fix his habitation in Venice."—Mrs. Oliphant, *The Makers of Venice*, Part iv, ch. i, p. 345.

"As it suddenly burst on one its entire aspect was English. It was not till a little later that the eye took note of the differences."—W. H. Mallock, *In An Enchanted Island*, p. 75.

"Till now that she was threatened with its loss, Emma had never known how much of happiness depended on being first with Mr. Knightley, first in interest and affection."—Jane Austen, *Emma*, vol. iii, ch. xii, p. 213.

It is interesting to note the gradations by which *till* (or *until*) and *before* pass into a common meaning. There is always an implication of *before* in *till* and *until* when used of time; but the sense that is in the foreground, in most cases, is that of continuance to a certain point. If the first and two last of the subjoined examples be compared, it will be seen that in the first the substitution of *before* for *till* would exactly reverse the sense,—for, at the time spoken of, the vessel could and did swim; in the two last quotations, however, the displacement of *till* and *until* by *before* would leave the sense (though not the smoothness of expression) unchanged. At what point the thought becomes such that *till* and *before* might be used interchangeably for its expression is a question that would, probably, be variously answered by different people, and variously, perhaps, even by the same person at different times.

"... it was not possible she could swim till we might run into port ..."—Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, vol. i, p. 14.

"Every attentive regarder of the character of Paul, not only as he was before his conversion but as he appears to us till his end, must have been struck with two things."—Matthew Arnold, *St. Paul and Protestantism*, p. 26.

"The subscribers engaged ... to persist in their undertaking till the liberties and the religion of the nation should be effectually secured."—Macaulay, *History of England*, vol. iii, ch. ix, p. 249.

But one vast realm of wonder spreads around,
And all the Muses tales seem truly told,
Till the sense aches with gazing to behold
The scenes our earliest dreams have dwelt upon.

Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Second Canto,
lxxxviii.

"Bessie ran till she was out of breath."—Mrs. Humphry Ward, *The Story of Bessie*

Costrell, Scene ii, p. 42.

"... and thus I lay till the water ebbed away, and left my raft and all my cargo safe on shore." *Robinson Crusoe*, vol. i, p. 65.

"It [the villa] seemed to profane the landscape, and I was sorry that I had set eyes on it till, after a minute or two spent indoors, we were taken out into the garden..."—W. H. Mallock, *In An Enchanted Island*, p. 77.

"... men of high rank, who had, till within a few days, been considered as zealous Royalists."—Macaulay, *History of England*, vol. iii, ch. ix, p. 276.—"... zealous Tories, who had, till very recently, held the doctrine of non-resistance in the most absolute form..."—*Ibid.*, p. 277.

"Until we had secured 850 head [of cattle] in the corral some hours afterwards, we scarcely saw each other to speak to."—Isabella L. Bird, *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains*, Letter ix.

"He used to go to meeting and preach himself, until his son took orders."—Thackeray, *The Book of Snobs*, ch. xiv.

"... laying up every corn, I resolved to sow them all again, hoping in time to have some quantity sufficient to supply me with bread; but it was not till the fourth year that I could allow myself the least grain of this corn to eat."—*Robinson Crusoe*, vol. i, p. 98.

"One terrible cry, ringing through the stillness of the night, was heard by the royal fleet, but it was not till the morning that the fatal news reached the King."—J. R. Green, *A Short History of the English People* (New York, 1882), ch. ii, sec. vi, p. 125.

"All men could not come in their own persons, and it was not for a long time, not till the twelfth or thirteenth century, that any one thought of choosing a smaller number of men to speak and act on behalf of all..."—Edward A. Freeman, *General Sketch of European History* (London, 1885), ch. x, sec. 6, p. 175.

"Until Mrs. Walker arrived, Miss Larkins was the undisputed princess of the Baroski company."—Thackeray, *The Ravenswing*, ch. iv.

"We never do anything well till we cease to think about the manner of doing it."—William Hazlitt, *On Prejudice (Sketches and Essays)*, London, 1884, p. 68.—"I never knew till the other day, that Lord Bolingbroke was the model on which Mr. Pitt formed himself."—*Id.* *On the Conversation of Lords (Sketches and Essays)*, p. 207.

"This will not go till all is over."—J. H. Newman, *Apologia* (London, 1883), ch. iv, p. 235.

"The answer to the French ultimatum will probably not be published until these pages are in our readers' hands." *The Spectator*, July 22, 1893, p. 101.

An indiscriminating use of *till* and *before* often produces ambiguity.

If we note the primary meaning of *till* and compare with it the sense of *before* where *till* and *before* seem to be interchangeable, we shall see that *before* carries varying implications according to the circumstances in which it is used. *Till* means, continually to a point of time mentioned or referred to, and usually with an implication of discontinuance at that point,—as, *he slept till the bell rang; it rained from ten till noon, I know, because I was out in it*. The rain spoken of in the second sentence may have continued after noon, but the speaker does not assert knowledge of it. Bearing in mind the meaning of *till*, let us examine two sentences in which *before* occurs.

(a) *Before he met with that accident his health was good.*

(b) *His health was good before he went to Colorado.*

In (a) *till* may be used for *before* because health is a continuing state, and his good health lasted to the time of the accident, at which point it ceased (by implication) to be good. But *before* produces here no ambiguity. In (b) *till* ought to be used instead of *before* if the meaning intended is that his health ceased to be good after he went to Colorado, for the sentence as it stands may be understood in more than one way, and there is nothing to show whether, after he went to Colorado, there was any change or not in his health.—We may say, then, that, where it appears from the circumstances—that is, without the use of *till*—that a state or act continued to a certain time and then ceased or changed, *before* and *till* may be used interchangeably, but that, if such meaning be intended, and the intention does not appear from the circumstances, then *till* ought to be used to make the meaning clear. Sentences of which (a) is the type are very common; frequent examples of them turn up in remarks, serious or burlesque, about things "before the War."—"What a moon that was—fo de Wah!"

The ambiguous *before* illustrated in (b) occurs in affirmative sentences; in negative sentences there may be an ambiguous *till*. One cannot know, from the sentence alone, "it did not rain till noon," whether the rain did not

begin before noon or whether it ceased before noon. If the former meaning is intended, the ambiguity will be removed by the substitution of *before* for *till*; if the latter sense is the right one, it should be apparent from the circumstances.

Returning now to the passage that has served as the text for this discourse—Dr. Hall's quotation from Howells—the question at once rises in the mind, *Is* "till" used there for "before?"—"It seemed long till that foolish voice was stilled."—To me the sense is not quite the same as when *before* is substituted. *Till* gives to "seemed" a continuance that is not conveyed in *before*, and that protracted duration of the seeming was doubtless the sense intended by the author. The two quotations from Howells that I have cited by conjecture as those referred to by Dr. Hall stand, perhaps, on a different footing.

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RAPHAEL'S POESY AND POESY IN FAUST.

In a very interesting article in this journal,¹ Kuno Francke has recently called attention to a parallel to Goethe's *Euphorion*. Indeed the resemblance between *Euphorion* and *Scherz* appears so striking that no one can help agreeing with the author that Goethe must have been influenced in this case by Tieck. It is furthermore a well-known fact that Euphorion represents Poesy and gradually assumes the features of Lord Byron. There remains nevertheless one stanza of the chorus requiring explanation, an explanation which will be attempted in the present article.

After Euphorion has stopped playing with the maidens he begins to ascend the rocks, and heedless of the warnings and pleadings of both parents and chorus, continues to mount until finally he can overlook the whole of the Peloponnesus and perceive its warlike aspect. Thereupon the chorus sings:²

Seht hinauf wie hoch gestiegen!
Und er scheint uns doch nicht klein.
Wie im Harnisch, wie zum Siegen,
Wie von Erz und Stahl der Schein.

¹ Vol. x, cols. 129-131.

² Vv. 9851-9854.

After Euphorion has replied in a speech full of warlike enthusiasm, the chorus continues:³

Heilige Poesie,
Himmeln steige sie,
Glänze, der schönste Stern,
Fern und so weiter fern,
Und sie erreicht uns doch
Immer, man hört sie noch,
Vernimmt sie gern.

Euphorion, however, goes on in his martial strain, thereby calling forth sad and reproachful words of Helena and Faust.

The stanza concerning Poesy is so truly inspired and so entirely in keeping with the beautiful lines in which Phorkyas has described the divinely poetical character of Euphorion, that the ordinary reader will scarcely notice any discrepancy here. A more careful inspection, however, cannot fail to disclose it. Indeed, it is so great that Schroeder seems to suppose that this stanza is not addressed to Euphorion at all, when he says:⁵ "Die Poesie steigt *wie* Euphorion himmeln, fern und ferner wie ein Stern," u.s.w.

Yet we may ask, how is it possible that at such a critical moment the chorus should address its apostrophe not to Euphorion who represents Poesy, but to Poesy as distinct from him? Is it not much easier for us to substitute in our imagination Poesy for Euphorion who is clothed like Apollo, the God of Poetry, with lyre in hand, than to connect him with Lord Byron which we have to do when the chorus sings his funeral dirge?

But granted that Poesy and Euphorion must be identical, we still wish for an explanation as to why Goethe should suddenly have substituted: 'Sacred Poesy rising heavenward and shining like the brightest star, yet ever reaching us with her melodies,' for the Apollinarian Euphorion who only a moment ago appeared to the chorus like a young Mars. This explanation is, I think, furnished us by Raphael's celebrated personification of Poesy in the *Stanza della Segnatura* of the Vatican. To be sure, Goethe does not mention this painting explicitly in any of his letters from Italy now extant, but it is evident that he appreciated it highly, for two of the copies of

³ Vv. 9863-9869.

⁴ Vv. 9619-9627.

⁵ Goethe's *Faust*, Second Part, 2d. ed, p. 271.